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ART. II. — *Poems*, by JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL. Cambridge : Published by John Owen. 1844. 12mo. pp. 279.

MR. LOWELL has already taken a high rank among the younger poets of America. His former volume, "A Year's Life," was noticed at some length in this Journal, immediately on its appearance ; and the opinion of its merits and defects, which we then pronounced, has been sanctioned on the whole by the assent of the public. Mr. Lowell has since appeared as a contributor to several journals, besides having edited for some time a monthly magazine, "The Pioneer," with marked ability. In this, he published prose papers, which, in our judgment, are among the very best of his writings ; we refer particularly to the articles on English song-writers. They show a deep appreciation of the poetical merits of those authors, and a fineness of critical tact quite unusual in the literature of the magazines.

Mr. Lowell evidently feels the sanctity of the poetical vocation. He devotes himself to it heart and soul, laboring to exercise his mind in careful study of the art, with respect both to thought and execution. Since the publication of his first volume, he has made great progress. He has acquired a more complete command of versification and language. He has, to a great extent, freed himself from the affectations and puerilities which were disagreeably prominent in that work. Affectation is one of the principal dangers that seem to beset American literature. In the throng and pressure of older communities, where the great mass of present literature is produced, oddities and affectations, unless they are supported by extraordinary genius, are soon laughed out of countenance. Ridicule is the keen weapon under which they speedily fall and expire. But in our country, intellectual powers are not brought into such perpetual collision ; and the poet has by no means so fearful an ordeal to pass through. If he show tolerable skill in versifying, if he marshal sounding sentiments into smoothly flowing lines, he is pretty sure to be set down, by one *coterie* at least, as a great poet, if not the very greatest of the country and age. We have among us little companies of people, each of which "keeps its poet" ; and not content with that, proclaims

from its small corner, with a most conceited air, that its poet is the man of the age. Thus, we have a sect of believers who think Mr. Bryant the greatest American poet ; another of those who declare Mr. Halleck the very man ; others still claim this distinguished rank for Percival ; *one man* thinks Cornelius Mathews has written the finest American poetry ; and a very respectable party of over-zealous admirers give the precedence to Mr. Lowell. We have our own private opinion on this interesting question, which we shall not at present divulge. Now, this tone of talking and writing is essentially youthful and silly. It is worse ; it does mischief to the subjects of such injudicious and measureless applause. It sets up false standards, and erects altars to a multiplicity of idols. It makes us appear to be a nation of very unwise and inexperienced boasters. Our exaggerated claims are necessarily laughed at by all whose views extend beyond the lines of "Little Pedlington" society. We are looked upon as a race of bragging boys, or but little better.

American literature is, in many respects, under very unfortunate influences. Many of our writers are men of imperfect knowledge, — men whose attainments in letters are, comparatively speaking, contemptible. Their range of thought is narrow, and their thoughts themselves are feeble. Their conceptions are indistinct ; their imagery wan and faded ; their expressions tame and commonplace, or tawdry and affected. The latter is quite as often the case as the former. This is the vice which has appeared within the last few years under a great variety of forms ; and, of all the vices by which American literature has been attacked, it has struck the deepest and spread the widest. We all remember when Mr. Carlyle's whimsical peculiarities made their first appearance, and the effect they had at once upon the servile tribe. Mr. Carlyle is a man of genius, learning, and humane tendencies ; his brilliant thoughts often break through the ragged clouds of his most absurd phraseology, and make us grieve, that an author capable of writing so well should write so execrably ; should spoil the effect of his fine powers by the paltry folly of imitating so bad a model as Jean Paul Richter ; an "original" writer who kept a commonplace book of odd expressions and far-fetched figures, which he embroidered on the ground of his natural style. The study of German became an epidemic about the time that Carlyle broke out ;

the two disorders aggravated each other, and ran through all the stages incident to literary affectation, until they assumed their worst form and common sense breathed its last, as the "Orphic Sayings" came, — those most unmeaning and witless effusions — we cannot say of the brain, for the smallest modicum of brains would have rendered their appearance an impossibility, — but of mere intellectual inanity.

Thus Carlyle rejected his own early and manly English style, to imitate in English a bad German model. The American Carlyle tribe imagined they were doing a wise and brilliant thing, by imitating the second-hand absurdities of an imitator, mistaking these borrowed follies for great originalities, and forgetting that affectation is the deadliest poison to the growth of sound literature. Similar affectations have made their appearance at other times and in other nations. The Euphuists were not quite so ridiculous as the Transcendentalists; the metaphysical poets were men of learning and genius, highly admired in their day for the very vices which have sunk them into complete oblivion now. The followers of Gongora and the *Culturists*, in Spain, so exquisitely described in a few pungent sentences in "Gil Blas," — what do they seem but a deplorable set of dunces, through whose works the literary historian plods his weary way, thanking the gods when he has left them far behind! The Marinisti in Italy played the same fantastic part, and have met with the same inevitable destiny. In France, the Hôtel Rambouillet, in the great age, was the nucleus around which gathered a band of beautiful spirits, who were annihilated by the *Précieuses Ridicules* of Molière, before they had reached the measureless inanity in which our fantastic youth disport themselves. In all these cases, more learning and genius were expended — incomparably more — than have as yet been embodied in the school of American affectations. Yet, among the American Euphuists are several men of really fine genius and respectable acquirements, and some very amiable women, who would adorn society, if they would consent to be themselves, and to clear their heads of cant. But being possessed of the demon of affectation, they strive to set themselves apart from the common herd, imagine that they are inhabitants of a sublimated ether, and look down with pitying contempt on all who profess an inability to detect a meaning in their vapid and mystical jargon.

A great deal of our poetry is tainted with the imitation of the mannerisms, which have successively prevailed in England during the last quarter of a century. For a time, the Byronic tone was taken up and reëchoed, till the patience of the public was thoroughly exhausted. Then we had feeble and flat imitations of Mrs. Hemans, which have not yet entirely disappeared ; and now, feebler and flatter imitations of Alfred Tennyson wear out the forbearance of a long-suffering community. In Mr. Lowell's first volume, we thought we saw a tendency to this second-hand poetizing ; a disposition to mimic the jingle of a man, who, with much genius and an exquisite ear for musical rhythm, has also a Titanian fondness for quaint and dainty expressions, affected turns, and mawkishly effeminate sentiment ; and who would be the worst model, therefore, not only for a young poet to imitate, but even to read ; so contagious are the vices of his manner.

But the symptoms have, to a great degree, passed off, or Mr. Lowell has nearly outgrown the disease with which his literary childhood was threatened, if not actually assailed. We recognize in his later productions a firmer intellect, a wider range of thought, a bolder tone of expression, and a versification greatly improved. We feel that he is now becoming master of his fine powers, and an artist in the execution of his conceptions. The character of his more elaborate productions is, in general, noble and elevated, though tinged somewhat with the vague speculations which pass current in some circles for philosophy. There is a similar vagueness in the expression of religious feeling ; positive religious views, though not rejected, are kept far in the background. Many of the poems are devoted to the utterance of sentiments of humanity ; and here, though the feelings expressed are always amiable and tender, the youth and inexperience of the poet are clearly manifested. He is a dreamer, apparently, brooding over the wrongs which are endured in the present state of society, and rashly inferring that the existing institutions are bad, and should be overthrown. Such radical opinions are not perhaps directly uttered, but the general tone tends that way.

Now, it requires but little observation to see, that the present state of the world is produced by the operation of natural laws, working slowly and surely through the ages ; and that the present organization of society can

be changed for the better only by the same gradual process. Every expression of lofty feeling, every act of heroism, every discovery of science, every newly found source of wealth and physical well being, every poetical creation, are incessantly coöperating towards this remote result. It does no good, however, to say that all is going wrong, as things are now constituted ; and to stand apart, and cultivate peculiarities of opinion and isolation of feeling, while the great world is in full activity all around us, is worse than idle. It is the part of the manly intellect to take hold of the work, whatever it be, that lies before him ; and, cheerfully falling in with the modes of action, and the manners of his contemporaries, so far as those modes of action and those manners have nothing against which an enlightened conscience revolts, to work, in his great taskmaster's eye, with simplicity, courage, and truth. The individual mind, once possessed with the idea, that it is animated by a spirit which does not condescend to enlighten others, that it has loftier views of society, or a wider and more comprehensive philanthropy, than others, runs the great danger of mistaking the suggestions of vanity for the dictates of conscience ; of cultivating singularity for the sake of making the beholder wonder, and of procuring the gratification of self-conceit by being pointed out in the streets and public places. The feeling is very apt to be the same as that by which persons are almost always animated, who adopt a peculiar costume, and cultivate oddity of personal appearance. Feeble imitations and affectations, of the same general description, though differing in species, are to be seen on every side, — outward indications of the same vices which have emasculated so much both of the prose and poetry of our literature.

We think a little more reflection will convince Mr. Lowell, that, in the opinions and principles of conduct now prevailing, in the organization of society and the current manners of the world, there is much less to dissent from than he seems at present to imagine ; and that a few years more will see him wholly emancipated from those peculiarities of thought and feeling, whose tendency is towards isolation ; whose result is to enfeeble the active powers first, and then to bring down the poetical genius from its lofty heights, and bind it to the narrow circle of individual views, thoughts, and experiences. With his manly reach of mind, it is impossible that he

should dwell long among the unsubstantial dreams of radical reform. The real interests of men, strong characters unfolded under the pressure of actual conflicts with the difficulties of life, passions burning in hearts that have borne the brunt of sorrow and suffering, — these are the subjects that must expel a dreamy philosophy, an unsubstantial religion, and a vague and brooding passion for some Utopian state of society, which the world can never reach, except by the slow operation of general laws, through a long series of centuries, if it reach at all.

Mr. Lowell's poems want compression. In the words of Taylor, the *why* needs pressing out. Redundancy, both of thought and expression, is the principal fault which we think the critical reader will be disposed to find with them. The subjects of many of his poems are drawn out to a wearisome length, by interweaving, not only the leading thoughts which belong to their proper treatment, but all the subordinate ideas and common-place moralities, which should be taken for granted, as understood of themselves. To borrow an expression from the writers on metre, they abound in *logæædic endings*; — they are poetry terminating in prose. Sometimes, at the end of a fine poetical piece, a long moral application is appended, like the "improvements" in the old Puritanical sermons. Now, either the moral conclusion would naturally be drawn by the attentive reader, or else the telling of the story, or the wording of the parable, is deficient in point and clearness. But there is no such deficiency in any of Mr. Lowell's poetical effusions of this class. The "Prometheus" is an instance of injuring the effect of an otherwise noble poem by too great prolixity. The conception of this piece is not only beautiful, but sublime; it is a Christian reproduction of the old myth, and, in general, is treated not only with high poetical beauty, but with a dignified elevation of moral feeling; but Prometheus is not characteristically represented. His soliloquy runs too far into minute details and ornamented expression, as if he were a gentleman a great deal more at his ease than he really was under the circumstances. The Prometheus of Æschylus utters lofty and audacious thoughts, in language of Titanic vastness and energy. Shelley treated a part of the fable with great affluence of poetical imagery and a heaven-defying boldness of thought. Goethe handled it with admirable

force and brevity. Lowell's "Prometheus" is masterly, and sustained at a high point of elegance and calm beauty ; but it is precisely this elegance and calm beauty which are out of keeping with the subject, considered with reference to the character and condition of the gigantic sufferer.

A good instance of the second fault, — that of the unnecessary enforcement of a moral application, — is in the delightfully written poem of "Rhæcus." All after the conclusion of the story, on page 125, were much better omitted ; that is, something more than two pages of very well expressed, but quite uncalled for, moralizing. Striking out all that, and some lines at the beginning, the poem is nearly faultless, as our readers will have an opportunity, by and by, of seeing.

Of Mr. Lowell's poetical style in general, the present volume has given us a high opinion. Not that it is by any means free from defects ; but it has the elements of a clear, vigorous, and pure form of expression. It shows the marks of a profound study of the English language, in the best authors ; and though the influence of particular writers is at times perceptible, his style is generally formed from the substantial materials taken from the heart of the language. For the most part, the constructions are clear, and the order of the words is free from those inversions which disfigure so much of the overstrained poetical composition of this age. Sometimes, though rarely, we find a studied quaintness of turn, a finical expression, or an extravagant simile or metaphor. Again, we are offended by words absurdly compounded, or used in a distorted sense. The termination of the imperfect tense, or passive participle, in *ed* is too frequently made an independent syllable. But all of these faults might easily be avoided. To justify these remarks, we shall copy a few examples.

"More *trembly* secret than Aurora's tear."

The meaning of this and of the following forced expression is too indistinct :

"Tremble *from the divine abyss* to cheer it.

So in the following lines,

"And what we win of earth's contentment slips
From our forlorn embraces not too slowly,"

the epithet *forlorn* conveys no very precise idea.

The metaphorical language in these lines is incongruous.

"A passing *shade of gall* would cloud his mien."

"*Soothing her bitter fetters* as she can."

To the following we hardly know what epithet to apply.

"Flooded, he seemed, with bright delicious pain,

As if a star had burst within his brain."

If he had written, *as if a bombshell had burst*, the expression would have been comparatively reasonable.

Again, what is "the starry energy of truth"? and what are the "days unruth"? "Wherewith it *wont* to soar;" *wont* is not now used as an imperfect tense, and to revive such an archaism is of questionable taste. "The weary *creep* of time"; as there is no such noun as *creep* in the English language, the expression is of course false.

Is there not a strange jumble of literal and figurative expression in this couplet?

"Watching and waiting there with lovelorn breast,
Around her *young dream's rudely scattered nest.*"

The meaning of "starlike" in the following connexion is not very obvious:

"that mother's heart whose instinct true,
Starlike, had battled down the triple gloom
Of sorrow, love, and death."

In the song of "Rosaline," a poem of much beauty, this strange couplet occurs:

"I waited *with a maddened grin*
To hear that voice all *icy thin.*"

There is not the least necessity of using such a specimen of American manufacture as that which we have marked in the following line.

"Through the *everydayness* of this work-day world."

We had marked many other examples of faulty expression, but it is unnecessary to copy more. They are all of that kind, which, though they mar the effect of the poems in which they occur, and should, therefore, be carefully avoided, are not inconsistent with the possession of all the essential attributes of a good poetical style. Mr. Lowell is in the right way to rid himself of them all.

We are now prepared to present our readers a few ex-

tracts from these poems, wherein the genius of Mr. Lowell has done itself justice, and which, in our judgment, will give him a high rank among the poets of America.

The first poem, "A Legend of Brittany," is written with great beauty and pathos ; but we prefer to leave it to be read as a whole. "Prometheus" ought to be short enough to quote entire ; but as it is not, we must give the conclusion only.

"Thou and all strength shall crumble, except Love,
By whom, and for whose glory, ye shall cease :
And, when thou art but a dim moaning heard
From out the pitiless glooms of Chaos, I
Shall be a power and a memory,
A name to fright all tyrants with, a light
Unsetting as the pole-star, a great voice
Heard in the breathless pauses of the fight
By truth and freedom ever waged with wrong,
Clear as a silver trumpet, to awake
Huge echoes that from age to age live on
In kindred spirits, giving them a sense
Of boundless power from boundless suffering wrung :
And many a glazing eye shall smile to see
The memory of my triumph, (for to meet
Wrong with endurance, and to overcome
The present with a heart that looks beyond,
Are triumph), like a prophet eagle, perch
Upon the sacred banner of the Right.
Evil springs up, and flowers, and bears no seed,
And feeds the green earth with its swift decay,
Leaving it richer for the growth of truth ;
But Good, once put in action or in thought,
Like a strong oak, doth from its boughs shed down
The ripe germs of a forest. Thou, weak god,
Shalt fade and be forgotten ! but this soul,
Fresh-living still in the serene abyss,
In every heaving shall partake, that grows
From heart to heart among the sons of men, —
As the ominous hum before the earthquake runs
Far through the Ægean from roused isle to isle, —
Foreboding wreck to palaces and shrines,
And mighty rents in many a cavernous error
That darkens the free light to man : — This heart,
Unscarred by thy grim vulture, as the truth
Grows but more lovely 'neath the beaks and claws

Of Harpies blind that fain would soil it, shall
In all the throbbing exultations share
That wait on freedom's triumphs, and in all
The glorious agonies of martyr-spirits, —
Sharp lightning-throes to split the jagged clouds
That veil the future, showing them the end, —
Pain's thorny crown for constancy and truth,
Girding the temples like a wreath of stars.
This is a thought, that, like the fabled laurel,
Makes my faith thunder-proof; and thy dread bolts
Fall on me like the silent flakes of snow
On the hoar brows of aged Caucasus;
But, O thought far more blissful, they can rend
This cloud of flesh, and make my soul a star!

“Unleash thy crouching thunders now, O Jove!
Free this high heart, which, a poor captive long,
Doth knock to be let forth, this heart which still,
In its invincible manhood, overtops
Thy puny godship, as this mountain doth
The pines that moss its roots. O, even now,
While from my peak of suffering I look down,
Beholding with a far-spread gush of hope
The sunrise of that Beauty, in whose face,
Shone all around with love, no man shall look
But straightway like a god he is uplift
Unto the throne long empty for his sake,
And clearly oft foreshadowed in wide dreams
By his free inward nature, which nor thou,
Nor any anarch after thee, can bind
From working its great doom, — now, now set free
This essence, not to die, but to become
Part of that awful Presence which doth haunt
The palaces of tyrants, to hunt off,
With its grim eyes and fearful whisperings
And hideous sense of utter loneliness,
All hope of safety, all desire of peace,
All but the loathed forefeeling of blank death, —
Part of that spirit which doth ever brood
In patient calm on the unpilfered nest
Of man's deep heart, till mighty thoughts grow fledged
To sail with darkening shadow o'er the world,
Filling with dread such souls as dare not trust
In the unfailing energy of Good,
Until they swoop, and their pale quarry make

Of some o'erbloated wrong, — that spirit which
Scatters great hopes in the seed field of man,
Like acorns among grain, to grow and be
A roof for freedom in all coming time !

“ But no, this cannot be ; for ages yet,
In solitude unbroken, shall I hear
The angry Caspian to the Euxine shout,
And Euxine answer with a muffled roar,
On either side storming the giant walls
Of Caucasus with leagues of climbing foam,
(Less, from my height, than flakes of downy snow,)
That draw back baffled but to hurl again,
Snatched up in wrath and horrible turmoil,
Mountain on mountain, as the Titans erst,
My brethren, scaling the high seat of Jove,
Heaved Pelion upon Ossa's shoulders broad,
In vain emprise. The moon will come and go
With her monotonous vicissitude ;
Once beautiful, when I was free to walk
Among my fellows, and to interchange
The influence benign of loving eyes,
But now by aged use grown wearisome ; —
False thought ! most false ! for how could I endure
These crawling centuries of lonely woe
Unshamed by weak complaining, but for thee,
Loneliest, save me, of all created things,
Mild-eyed Astarte, my best comforter,
With thy pale smile of sad benignity ?

“ Year after year will pass away and seem
To me, in mine eternal agony,
But as the shadows of dumb summer-clouds,
Which I have watched so often darkening o'er
The vast Sarmatian plain, league-wide at first,
But, with still swiftness, lessening on and on
Till cloud and shadow meet and mingle where
The gray horizon fades into the sky,
Far, far to northward. Yes, for ages yet
Must I lie here upon my altar huge,
A sacrifice for man. Sorrow will be,
As it hath been, his portion ; endless doom,
While the immortal with the mortal linked
Dreams of its wings and pines for what it dreams,
With upward yearn unceasing. Better so :

For wisdom is meek sorrow's patient child,
And empire over self, and all the deep
Strong charities that make men seem like gods ;
And love, that makes them be gods, from her breasts
Sucks in the milk that makes mankind one blood.
Good never comes unmixed, or so it seems,
Having two faces, as some images
Are carved, of foolish gods ; one face is ill ;
But one heart lies beneath, and that is good,
As are all hearts, when we explore their depths.
Therefore, great heart, bear up ! thou art but type
Of what all lofty spirits endure, that fain
Would win men back to strength and peace through love :
Each hath his lonely peak, and on each heart
Envy, or scorn, or hatred, tears lifelong
With vulture beak ; yet the high soul is left ;
And faith, which is but hope grown wise ; and love ;
And patience, which at last shall overcome."

We omit the beginning and the end of "Rhæcus," but give all that properly belong to the subject.

"A youth named Rhæcus, wandering in the wood,
Saw an old oak just trembling to its fall,
And, feeling pity of so fair a tree,
He propped its gray trunk with admiring care,
And with a thoughtless footstep loitered on.
But, as he turned, he heard a voice behind
That murmured 'Rhæcus !' 'T was as if the leaves,
Stirred by a passing breath, had murmured it,
And, while he paused bewildered, yet again
It murmured 'Rhæcus !' softer than a breeze.
He started and beheld with dizzy eyes
What seemed the substance of a happy dream
Stand there before him, spreading a warm glow
Within the green glooms of the shadowy oak.
It seemed a woman's shape, yet all too fair
To be a woman, and with eyes too meek
For any that were wont to mate with gods.
All naked like a goddess stood she there,
And like a goddess all too beautiful
To feel the guilt-born earthliness of shame.
'Rhæcus, I am the Dryad of this tree,'
Thus she began, dropping her low-toned words
Serene, and full, and clear, as drops of dew,
'And with it I am doomed to live and die ;

The rain and sunshine are my caterers,
Nor have I other bliss than simple life ;
Now ask me what thou wilt, that I can give,
And with a thankful joy it shall be thine.'

" Then Rhæcus, with a flutter at the heart,
Yet, by the prompting of such beauty, bold,
Answered : ' What is there that can satisfy
The endless craving of the soul but love ?
Give me thy love, or but the hope of that
Which must be evermore my spirit's goal.'
After a little pause she said again,
But with a glimpse of sadness in her tone,
' I give it, Rhæcus, though a perilous gift ;
An hour before the sunset meet me here.'
And straightway there was nothing he could see
But the green glooms beneath the shadowy oak,
And not a sound came to his straining ears
But the low trickling rustle of the leaves,
And far away upon an emerald slope
The falter of an idle shepherd's pipe.

" Now, in those days of simpleness and faith,
Men did not think that happy things were dreams
Because they overstepped the narrow bourne
Of likelihood, but reverently deemed
Nothing too wondrous or too beautiful
To be the guerdon of a daring heart.
So Rhæcus made no doubt that he was blest,
And all along unto the city's gate
Earth seemed to spring beneath him as he walked,
The clear, broad sky looked bluer than its wont,
And he could scarce believe he had not wings,
Such sunshine seemed to glitter through his veins
Instead of blood, so light he felt and strange.

" Young Rhæcus had a faithful heart enough,
But one that in the present dwelt too much,
And, taking with blithe welcome whatsoever
Chance gave of joy, was wholly bound in that,
Like the contented peasant of a vale,
Deemed it the world, and never looked beyond.
So, haply meeting in the afternoon
Some comrades who were playing at the dice,
He joined them and forgot all else beside.

“ The dice were rattling at the merriest,
And Rhæcus, who had met but sorry luck,
Just laughed in triumph at a happy throw,
When through the room there hummed a yellow bee
That buzzed about his ear with down-dropped legs
As if to light. And Rhæcus laughed and said,
Feeling how red and flushed he was with loss,
‘ By Venus ! does he take me for a rose ? ’
And brushed him off with rough, impatient hand.
But still the bee came back, and thrice again
Rhæcus did beat him off with growing wrath.
Then through the window flew the wounded bee,
And Rhæcus, tracking him with angry eyes,
Saw a sharp mountain-peak of Thessaly
Against the red disc of the setting sun, —
And instantly the blood sank from his heart,
As if its very walls had caved away.
Without a word he turned, and, rushing forth,
Ran madly through the city and the gate,
And o’er the plain, which now the wood’s long shade,
By the low sun thrown forward broad and dim,
Darkened wellnigh unto the city’s wall.

“ Quite spent and out of breath he reached the tree,
And, listening fearfully, he heard once more
The low voice murmur ‘ Rhæcus ! ’ close at hand :
Whereat he looked around him, but could see
Nought but the deepening glooms beneath the oak.
Then sighed the voice, ‘ O, Rhæcus ! nevermore
Shalt thou behold me or by day or night,
Me, who would fain have blest thee with a love
More ripe and bounteous than ever yet
Filled up with nectar any mortal heart :
But thou didst scorn my humble messenger,
And sent’st him back to me with bruised wings.
We spirits only show to gentle eyes,
We ever ask an undivided love,
And he who scorns the least of Nature’s works
Is thenceforth exiled and shut out from all.
Farewell ! for thou canst never see me more.’

“ Then Rhæcus beat his breast, and groaned aloud,
And cried, ‘ Be pitiful ! forgive me yet
This once, and I shall never need it more ! ’
‘ Alas ! ’ the voice returned, ‘ ’t is thou art blind,

Not I unmerciful ; I can forgive,
But have no skill to heal thy spirit's eyes ;
Only the soul hath power o'er itself.
With that again there murmured ' Nevermore ! '
And Rhæcus after heard no other sound,
Except the rattling of the oak's crisp leaves,
Like the long surf upon a distant shore,
Raking the sea-worn pebbles up and down.
The night had gathered round him : o'er the plain
The city sparkled with its thousand lights,
And sounds of revel fell upon his ear
Harshly and like a curse ; above, the sky,
With all its bright sublimity of stars,
Deepened, and on his forehead smote the breeze :
Beauty was all around him and delight,
But from that eve he was alone on earth."

" A Glance behind the Curtain " is excellent in parts, but is a terribly protracted glance.

The " Chippewa Legend " is very good, except the *improvement*, which has no other fault but that of being unnecessary. One cant expression in the poem should be blotted out in the next edition ; " Old lies and shams." The affected writers have repeated the word *sham* so often, that no respectable author can use it safely for the next hundred years.

We have no great fondness for sentimentality in type. Much of this in the present volume would have been better omitted. *Subjective* feelings, to use the jargon of philosophical criticism, should be but rarely and reservedly expressed in books. The sonnets are the least successful pieces ; especially those addressed to Wordsworth, which, so far as they have any meaning at all, have an assuming one.

We close our extracts with the fine poem called " The Heritage."

" THE rich man's son inherits lands,
And piles of brick, and stone, and gold,
And he inherits soft, white hands,
And tender flesh that fears the cold,
Nor dares to wear a garment old ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

" The rich man's son inherits cares ;
The bank may break, the factory burn,
A breath may burst his bubble shares,

And soft, white hands could hardly earn
A living that would serve his turn ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

“ The rich man’s son inherits wants,
His stomach craves for dainty fare ;
With sated heart, he hears the pants
Of toiling hinds with brown arms bare,
And wearies in his easychair ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
One scarce would wish to hold in fee.

“ What doth the poor man’s son inherit ?
Stout muscles and a sinewy heart,
A hardy frame, a hardier spirit ;
King of two hands, he does his part
In every useful toil and art ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

“ What doth the poor man’s son inherit ?
Wishes o’erjoyed with humble things,
A rank adjudged by toilwon merit,
Content that from employment springs,
A heart that in his labor sings ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

“ What doth the poor man’s son inherit ?
A patience learned of being poor,
Courage, if sorrow come, to bear it,
A fellow-feeling that is sure
To make the outcast bless his door ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
A king might wish to hold in fee.

“ O, rich man’s son ! there is a toil,
That with all others level stands ;
Large charity doth never soil,
But only whiten, soft, white hands, —
This is the best crop from thy lands ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being rich to hold in fee.

“ O, poor man’s son ! scorn not thy state ;
There is worse weariness than thine,
In merely being rich and great ;

Toil only gives the soul to shine,
And makes rest fragrant and benign ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Worth being poor to hold in fee.

“ Both, heirs to some six feet of sod,
Are equal in the earth at last ;
Both, children of the same dear God,
Prove title to your heirship vast
By record of a well-filled past ;
A heritage, it seems to me,
Well worth a life to hold in fee.”

We have endeavoured to do justice to the merits of this young and gifted poet, while we have pointed out, with perfect candor, the faults that still inhere in his poetical manner, and the dangerous influences to which his poetical genius is exposed. That he will soar above the spirit of *coteries* ; that he will reject the bad taste of cultivating singularities in thought and expression, and descend from the clouds of vague philosophy and Utopian reforms ; that he will brace his mind with strengthening knowledge in science, history, and social life ; and that he will thus create a noble sphere for the exercise of his fine powers, and give additional lustre to a name already crowned with the honors of professional, literary, and mercantile eminence ; is what we not only hope, but, in the faith of achievements already performed, confidently predict and believe.

ART. III. — *Report of the Land Agent of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, laid before the Legislature, January 10th, 1844.* By GEORGE W. COFFIN. 8vo. pp. 12.

In a former number of this Journal,* we devoted some attention to the forest trees of America, and took a passing notice of the lumberer ; † we propose, now, to give a brief

* *N. A. Review*, Number XCV.

† The necessity of introducing new words into a language grows out of the changes effected from time to time in the circumstances and pursuits of men. The use of the word *lumber* and its derivatives is peculiar to this